

**SPECIAL MEETING OF
DIRECTORS OF BELMONT FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
Tuesday, October 11, 2005 7:30 PM
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, ONE TWIN PINES LANE**

ROLL CALL

Directors Present: Mathewson, Feierbach, Metropulos, Warden

Directors Absent: Bauer

Staff Present: Interim District Manager Crist, Interim City Attorney Zafferano, Fire Chief Lowden, Finance Director Fil, District Secretary Cook.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by District Secretary Cook.

ITEMS APPROVED ON CONSENT CALENDAR

Minutes of Regular Meeting of July 26, 2005.

ACTION: On a motion by Director Mathewson, seconded by Director Metropulos, the Consent Calendar was unanimously approved by a show of hands.

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

Alternative Proposals for Future Fire Services in the City of Belmont

Interim District Manager Crist provided a brief history of the delivery of fire services to the Cities of Belmont and San Carlos through the South County Fire Authority. He stated that the Authority is scheduled to dissolve on June 30, 2006. Requests for proposal for the delivery of fire service from other agencies were solicited, and five proposals were received. The fire subcommittee (Warden/Feierbach) has met several times to review the proposals, and staff has met with key staff from all agencies except Menlo Park, which is scheduled subsequent to this meeting. He outlined the standard for comparison for all proposals, which serves as a benchmark.

Interim District Manager Crist introduced Cory Biggs from Maze and Associates, who provided a written analysis of four of the proposals. He noted that the fifth proposal, from the Firefighters Local 2400, was received within the last week, so no analysis has yet been made for that proposal.

Cory Biggs, Maze and Associates, noted that costs for providing fire services have been rising, and the Fire Protection District has experienced a loss of property tax since the Harbor Industrial Area (HIA) annexed to San Carlos in 1997. He also noted the failure of the tax measure in 2003, which would have provided additional revenues. He outlined the proposals, and reviewed the comparison of scope of services for each. He outlined policy and transition issues, and explained the methodology used for providing equal comparisons, including cost per service unit.

Mr. Biggs noted that proposals from Menlo Park and the California Department of Forestry provide the broadest scope of services, including Hazmat (Hazardous Materials), and noted they propose to use existing Authority equipment and employees.

Interim District Manager Crist clarified that each agency has the ability to provide the desired level of service, and to use all the existing equipment. Advance Life Support and Basic Life Support (ALS/BLS) services would continue, and liabilities would be retained. He recommended that the Firefighters Local 2400 proposal be referred to Maze and Associates for analysis, that Menlo Park be eliminated from the list, and that the other three proposals receive additional consideration.

In response to Councilmember Feierbach, Finance Director Fil clarified that the initial loss of revenue to the Fire Protection District due to the HIA annexation was \$150,000, which has increased over the years. He noted this results in a double impact, since the amount of the matching funds from Belmont's share for South County Fire comes from the Fire Protection District.

Gary Fauth, Firefighters Local 2400, outlined the Firefighters' proposal. He noted that the firefighters have a 25-year history through South County Fire Authority, and that its proposal maintains its existing structure. The proposal recommends that management and administrative services be provided through a shared agreement with another agency, which should result in no reduction in level of service. He thanked the Belmont staff and Council for its open discussion and dialog regarding this issue, and stated that the firefighters have been heard.

Ed Everett, City Manager/Redwood City, stated that the decision regarding fire services is one of public policy, as costs for Redwood City's proposal will not necessarily be lower than other proposals. He expressed concern regarding continuity of boundaries for providing service, as it is inefficient to jump boundaries to do so. He also expressed concern regarding the need to move equipment. He noted no analysis has been made of operational issues.

Brian Kelly, San Mateo Fire Chief, stated that the San Mateo Fire Department already partners with South County Fire Authority in many areas, and requested further consideration of its proposal. He clarified that education and training is the same for local agencies and CDF.

In response to Council questions regarding Hazmat, Mr. Kelly responded that San Mateo could provide these services. He noted that all San Mateo County chiefs desire to maintain the current level of service for Hazmat, and this could be accomplished at Fire Station 13. Regional training and team response could be initiated, and the costs could be covered by Office of Emergency Services County-wide service.

John Ferreira, California Department of Forestry (CDF), stated that all fire services agencies in the area work cooperatively together, including CDF. He noted this is a difficult situation for the Authority and the Fire Protection District.

In response to Council questions, Mr. Ferreira clarified that CDF is the initial responder in many regions throughout the State, including within San Mateo County, and assists other agencies

when requested. He explained the differences in duty hours and compensation between CDF and other agencies. He recommended that if CDF is to be considered for services for Belmont, a two-tier salary system could be implemented.

Discussion ensued.

South County Fire Chief Lowden clarified that the Authority's current staffing is at 18, and should be at 24. He noted that Hazmat services is an issue that needs to be addressed Countywide, since costs are being subsidized by the South County Fire Authority. He added that the County has not been willing to absorb the costs, and is not interested in revisiting the issue during the current fiscal year.

President Warden recommended that a letter be sent to all fire jurisdictions in the County that it is not the responsibility of the Authority to provide Hazmat services for the County.

Gerald Kohlmann, Redwood City Fire Chief, explained the differences in staffing and duties between smaller and larger jurisdictions. He noted that smaller agencies rely on battalion chiefs for administrative duties, and that some savings could be realized, based on duty expectations.

Warren Lieberman, Councilmember-elect/Former Finance Commissioner, stated that there may be value in reconvening the fire subcommittee to review the proposals.

Discussion ensued. The Directors concurred to wait until after staff meets with representatives from Menlo Park to make a decision regarding the status of their proposal. They also concurred to refer the Firefighters Local 2400 proposal to Maze and Associates for analysis, and to schedule a special Fire Protection District meeting in November to discuss the analysis.

Director Bauer stated that it might be useful to reconvene the subcommittee, as recommended by Mr. Lieberman. President Warden expressed concern regarding the timeline. He noted that Maze has provided a comprehensive analysis of the other proposals. He recommended that the Belmont Finance Commission review the proposals.

President Warden stated that several good proposals have been received. He expressed appreciation to the South County Firefighters due to the uncertainty of this issue.

ADJOURNMENT at this time, being 8:38 P.M.

Meeting audio-recorded and videotaped
Audio Recording 619
Minutes approved 11/22/2005

Terri Cook
District Secretary